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ABSTRACT

A study was done to investigate and document the nature and quality of actual mentoring relationships and the processes used to establish and support such relationships in Minneapolis (Minnesota). Interviews were conducted with mentoring program staff about pairs of proteges and mentors, with mentors, with proteges, and with another significant adult in each case who had first-hand information about the mentoring relationship. Four mentor relationships were included from each of five types of programs: traditional, long-term focused activity, short-term focused activity, team mentoring, and group mentoring. A total of 46 interviews were completed. The analysis found that participants in traditional programs described their relationships as meaningful, substantial, and important. Participants in long-term focused activity programs found attitudinal changes and enjoyment. Short-term, focused activity programs such as school-based tutoring brought significant benefits to participants. Team mentoring of more than one adult working with a young person often involved matching a child from a single parent family with a two-parent family and frequently resulted in a special more intense relationship with the father. Group mentoring where one adult works with a group of youth such as Girl Scouts resulted in satisfaction for the adult with the positive response from the youth, and all those interviewed spoke to the utility of these group sessions and the effectiveness of the processes used in the groups. The report includes a chart showing the topology of mentoring programs. (JB)

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UNDERSTANDING MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

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For
the BUDDY SYSTEM of
the Minneapolis Youth Trust

Funded by
The McKnight Foundation

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working together for kids

The study was funded by The McKnight Foundation for the BUDDY SYSTEM, a division of the Minneapolis Youth Trust, a non-profit organization that promotes, initiates, and develops partnerships to help Minneapolis children and youth, K-12, become ready for life and work. The BUDDY SYSTEM is a consortium of agencies that conduct mentoring, tutoring, and friendship programs for children and youth in Minneapolis. For more information on the BUDDY SYSTEM and the Minneapolis Youth Trust, contact the Minneapolis Youth Trust, Young Quinlan Building, Suite 200, 81 S. 9th Street, Minneapolis, MN 55402; (612) 370-9185.

Search Institute, which conducted the study, is a non-profit applied research organization specializing in children and youth.

Understanding Mentoring Relationships

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and, most importantly,
the children,
the parents and guardians,
the teachers, and the mentors

who let us into their busy lives
to get a glimpse of a special relationship

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

As we move into the 1990s, two simultaneous and perhaps intertwined threads are weaving their way through the fabric of this country. One focuses on the number of unprepared young people who are entering the workforce only to fail and enter the ranks of the disenfranchised and "disempowered." The other thread is a strong, pervasive, and ever-increasing commitment to and active involvement in volunteerism and community service.

Mentoring—adult volunteers forming direct relationships with young people—is one strategy that weaves together both strands. This study highlights the possibilities, diversity, and benefits of these relationships for the young people (mentees), the adults who volunteer (mentors), and, in the end, society as a whole.

PURPOSE

This study was designed to investigate and document the nature and quality of actual mentoring relationships and the processes used to establish and support such relationships. Thus, the project centered around the processes and outcomes of mentoring relationships, not on comparing the effectiveness of different types of mentoring programs. The study:

- Provides potential mentors with information about different mentoring programs to guide their decisions about where to volunteer. It highlights the uniqueness of different mentoring approaches, each of which matches specific needs, interests, and commitments of potential volunteers
- Gives agencies and organizations a systematic way of describing their mentoring programs and their unique characteristics.
- Gives policy makers and others interested in mentoring a framework for understanding mentoring programs.

The study was funded by The McKnight Foundation for the BUDDY SYSTEM, a division of the Minneapolis Youth Trust, a non-profit organization that promotes, initiates, and develops partnerships to help Minneapolis children and youth, K-12, become ready for life and work. The BUDDY SYSTEM is a consortium of agencies that conduct mentoring, tutoring, and friendship programs for children and youth in Minneapolis. Search Institute, which conducted the study, is a non-profit applied research organization specializing in children and youth.

HIGHLIGHTS

The heart of the study is an examination of five types of mentoring programs—their program process, the nature of the mentoring relationship, the impact on both the mentor and mentee, and relations with mentees' families.

All of the programs in the study fill a particular niche and need. Some focus on academic tutoring, some provide role models and friendship, and some provide extra support and guidance concerning post-secondary options. Thus all of the programs address important issues and should not be judged against each other.

The findings are summarized in the chart on page 3. Below are highlights on each program type, each of which is illustrated with details from the specific program studied. Other programs within each category would vary in the details..

- **Traditional**—This category encompasses programs that many think of as the typical type of mentoring program: one adult in a friendship oriented role model relationship with one child. The traditional program studied here involves a one-year commitment (many last much longer), and mentors are expected to meet with their mentees a minimum of three hours per week.

  Without exception, the mentors and mentees in this program describe their relationship as meaningful, substantial, and important to them. One mentee said of

her mentor: "She is my missing piece. My missing sister. She is my friend."

- **Long-term, focused activities**—These programs focus on a particular goal or outcome, over and above friendship or role modeling. They are sometimes remedial in nature, as in tutoring programs for under-achieving students, but often are designed to build on existing skills and abilities to encourage or promote academic progress or career exploration and skills.

  Benefits to mentees involved in the particular program studied include attitudinal changes about the value of education, new work skills, and employment opportunities. All mentors reported enjoying their role.

- **Short-term, focused activity**—Programs in this category also focus in a particular area such as school or careers, but do not require mentors to make more than a six-month commitment. The program involved in this study is a school-based tutoring program for students K-12. The mentors commit to two hours per week for 10 weeks and generally tutor one or two students throughout that time period.

  Even when one-to-one time is limited, volunteers, students, and teachers all report significant benefits from this program. Teachers said that the individual help these volunteers give to students is invaluable and critical to the overall progress of these students.

- **Team mentoring**—Team mentoring occurs when more than one adult volunteer works with a young person. This may include a family or two (or more) unrelated adults working together. Mentors in the particular program studied are expected to get together with their mentees once per week for two to four hours. Mentors make a year long commitment to the program but regularly remain involved with the young person for several years.

When children in this type of program come from single head of household families and are matched with two-parent families, they can experience men and women role models in a family setting. While the mentee develops relationships with all members of the family, they often have a special, more intense relationship with the father of the mentor family.

- **Group mentoring**—Group mentoring occurs when one adult volunteer works with a small group of young people. Girl Scouts, for instance, are beginning to view their volunteer troop leaders and assistants as mentors.

  All of the people who were interviewed spoke to the utility of these group sessions and the effectiveness of the processes used in the groups. "These kids really respond to you," one mentor said. "It's an hour in their week when someone says, 'Hey you're doing a really great job.' "

TYPOLOGY OF MENTORING PROGRAMS

A review of the literature about mentoring, talks with agency staff, and input from the technical assistance committee of the Buddy System, provided the basis for the mentoring typology that guided this study. The following descriptions do not necessarily reflect the details of other programs.

	TRADITIONAL	LONG-TERM, FOCUSED ACTIVITY	SHORT-TERM, FOCUSED ACTIVITY	TEAM MENTORING	GROUP MENTORING
DESCRIPTION	One adult and one youth form a friendship. The adult is a positive role model.	One adult is paired with one child to achieve a particular goal, usually academic.	Similar to long-term, focused activity, but involves a shorter commitment.	A family or team forms a friendship with one youth, often from a single-parent family.	One adult volunteer builds relationships with a group of young people.
EXAMPLES	Big Brother/Big Sister program	Tutoring, career mentors	In-school tutoring, summer internships	Kinship programs	Girl Scout leaders are being seen as mentors.
PROGRAM PROCESSES	The application, screening, and matching are extensive and comprehensive. Training is not essential.	The brief screening process focuses on skills, interests, and career issues. Workshops are offered for mentors and mentees.	Less rigorous screening because of constant supervision and short commitment. Mentors receive orientation.	Screening is thorough. Matches are based on location, interests, and personality. Training is minimal.	Minimal screening and matching are typical. Extensive training and guidebooks add needed skills.
COMMITMENT	Long term commitments are required, and many last several years. Mentors and mentees meet about weekly.	Long term (at least one year) are required with regular contact each month (six hours).	These programs are short-term (between two to five months). Most mentors meet frequently with their mentees.	The relationship is long-term, and involves frequent contact (at least two to four hours every week).	Mentor makes a long-term commitment to meet regularly with the group as a leader or co-leader.
NATURE OF RELATIONSHIP	Mentors are to be friends who do fun things with mentees, not adults who buy them things or take them expensive places.	The relationship varies. Mentors offer support and advice with school- or career-related issues. Personal relationships are neither encouraged or discouraged.	Relationship varies considerably, depending on the mentor's skills and the program's and mentee's needs.	Mentee becomes a part of an "extended family." Mentees often develop a strong relationship with a particular family member (often the father).	Most of the interaction is guided by the session structure, which includes time for personal sharing and group activities.
ACTIVITIES	Activities vary. Pairs do everyday things and "just hang out together."	Activities are specified by the program content.	Activities may involve individual or group work in the classroom.	Mentors are encouraged to do everyday things with mentees.	Specific activities may or may not be specified by the program.
IMPACT ON MENTEE	Mentees say the relationships are meaningful, important, and substantial.	The relationship often changes the mentee's attitudes toward school and career options.	Teachers say mentors' help is invaluable in enhancing student progress.	Young people observe and experience positive relationships.	The program impact tends to be stronger than the impact of the individual mentor.
IMPACT ON MENTOR	Mentors feel satisfaction in doing something worthwhile and building a good friendship.	Varies. Most express satisfaction about making a difference.	Some gain needed teaching and leadership experience.	The relationship exposes the family to other children and expands their perspective.	Time with children, group structure, and training are all seen as beneficial and meaningful.

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Ingredients for Success

Several key ingredients for successful mentoring programs emerged from the interviews and observations in this study. They include:

- **Provide appropriate screening, matching, and training**—When mentoring relationships are unsupervised, and the nature and location of activities are unspecified, extensive screening is critical. Training is most important when the program goal is remedial (e.g. tutoring or increased social skills).
- **Provide adequate support and communication structures**—Mentors who feel they have easy access to program staff feel more confident and supported. A feedback loop through which everyone can discuss needs and progress is important to a sense of support for mentors.
- **Provide opportunities for social activities**—Both mentors and mentees expressed a desire for program-supported social activities and events.
- **Ensure a good match between mentor expectations and program goals**—Initial interviews with mentors should explain the type of mentoring relationship, expectations of commitment, and depth or type of relationship.
- **Communicate appropriately with the mentor's family**—Programs should be clear about expectations of family involvement with the mentor and the program staff. While some programs may view family involvement as inappropriate, this expectation should be made clear to all involved.

Research Methodology

The design for this study included interviews with mentoring program staff about pairs of mentees and mentors, and with the mentor, the mentee, and another significant adult who has first-hand information about the relationship (e.g., parent, teacher, guardian). Four mentor relationships were included from each participating program. In this way, the data provides multiple perspectives and a means of assessing the data.

Participating programs were selected to represent the five program types identified in the mentoring typology. Program staff were asked to suggest mentoring pairs that fell into several categories: ones in which the relationship worked: (1) as well as staff expected; (2) better than staff expected; (3) not as well as staff expected; and (4) a random pair.

Four pairs were selected from each type of mentoring program. Interviews were then conducted with 17 mentors, 11 mentees, and 13 parents, guardians, and teachers. In all, 46 of the 65 projected interviews were completed (71%), including staff interviews from five program types. Because of the sample size and nature of the study, generalizations about program types would be inappropriate.

Conclusion

Expanding the understanding and definition of mentoring to include a range of mentoring opportunities opens new options for volunteers. Adults can choose a program that fits their preference for type and depth of relationship, and length of commitment. Some adults may choose to get involved in long-term, in-depth relationships, while others may opt for shorter, less intense personal commitments.

Regardless of the particular type of program, mentoring is a win-win situation. Within just the five programs participating in this study, more than 1,000 volunteers are working with more than 1,800 young people in significant, beneficially, and, most certainly, cost-effective relationships. Young people win; adult volunteers win. In the end, society at large is the real winner.

INTRODUCTION

During August of 1991, Carol Truesdell, executive director of the Minneapolis Youth Trust, contacted Search Institute about the possibility of conducting an evaluation of the member agencies and programs of the Buddy System, a division of the Youth Trust. Truesdell explained that the McKnight Foundation had asked her to develop a strategy to address these questions: (1) What are the standards for quality control which are being used by Buddy System programs? and (2) What are the outcomes of mentoring relationships within Buddy System programs? These research questions center around concerns related to *quality* (what standards or guidelines are being utilized to help ensure healthy matches) and *effectiveness* (what are the mentees and other participants getting out of these relationships).

Our experience in interviewing over 50 mentoring program staff from around the country about training needs for an earlier project with the Minneapolis Youth Trust also indicated a need for: (1) more systematic information about all of the processes used to screen mentors, match mentors and mentees, and provide on-going follow-up, support and training for members; and (2) a process for categorizing different types of mentoring programs in order to more systematically understand differential impacts, outcomes, and programmatic processes for screening, matching and training.

Melding the needs of program staff with the questions raised by the McKnight Foundation, an evaluation proposal was submitted to the McKnight Foundation. The study's goal was:

> *To investigate and document the nature and quality of actual Buddy System mentoring relationships and the processes used to establish and support such relationships. (evaluation proposal, Search Institute)*

The study was designed to understand mentoring relationships within Buddy System agencies. It was not intended to evaluate how well individual programs are doing nor to

compare the effectiveness of different types of mentoring programs.

The Technical Assistance committee of the Buddy System and the staff of the Youth Trust advised the project with regard to processes for agency and mentoring selection, the development of the mentoring typology, as well as strategies and suggestions for effectively reporting the data.

THE MENTORING TYPOLOGY

As was indicated earlier, the focus of this study was to document and investigate the quality of Buddy System relationships and the processes which are used to establish and support these relationships. In order to accomplish this goal, given the wide range of types of mentoring programs involved in the Buddy System, a typology for categorizing different types of mentoring relationships was created.

A review of the literature about mentoring, conversations with staff of mentoring programs, and input from the Technical Assistance committee, provided the basis for the creation of the mentoring typology. The typology includes five mentoring program archetypes:

- Traditional
- Long-Term, Focused Activities
- Short-Term, Focused Activities
- Team Mentoring
- Group Mentoring

Each of these program types can be described along the following dimensions:

(1) Structure of Relationship
Mentoring relationships are perhaps most often thought of as one adult to one child relationships. However, mentoring also occurs in other forms, e.g., one adult to a group of children, more than one adult to a child.

(2) Minimum Length of Commitment
The range of commitments required of mentors ranges from short-term commitments of 2 to 6 months to long-term commitments which exceed 6 months.

(3) Intensity of Relationship
This dimension refers to the frequency and duration of actual meeting time between a mentor and a mentee. Frequent contact is defined as meeting once a week for at least two hours.

(4) Nature of Activity

This dimension ranges from general to focused activities and refers to whether the nature of the activities in which the mentor and mentee pair participate are determined by the program and are goal-directed (focused), for example are tutoring or career-oriented, or whether the activities are not determined by the program and the relationship goal is more general, as in friendship or companionship programs.

(5) Activity Location

This dimension asks where the mentoring takes places. Mentoring programs vary in terms of whether the activities always occur in a specific location (e.g., a school, the agency) or whether the location varies.

(6) Supervision

This dimension refers to whether the mentoring relationship is generally supervised or unsupervised.

The typology, summarized below, describes each of the archetypes along these dimensions. Programs within a given category may vary along some of these dimensions but they are included here as descriptive examples of what are likely the most common characteristics of the archetype.

MENTORING TYPOLOGY DESCRIPTION

TRADITIONAL	• 1 Adult to 1 Child • Long-Term (more than 6 months) • Frequent Contact (about once per week) • Unspecified Nature and Location of Activity • Unsupervised
LONG-TERM, FOCUSED ACTIVITIES (e.g., tutoring, career-oriented programs)	• 1 Adult to 1 Child • Long-Term • Frequent Contact • Specified Nature and Location of Activities • Supervised
SHORT-TERM, FOCUSED ACTIVITIES (e.g., summer internships, brief-tutoring programs)	• 1 Adult to 1 Child • Short-Term (between 2 to 5 months) • Frequent Contact • Specified Nature and Location of Activities • Supervised
TEAM MENTORING	• Team, Couple or Family (more than 1) to Child • Long-Term • Frequent Contact • Unspecified Nature and Location of Activity • Unsupervised
GROUP MENTORING	• 1 Adult to Group of Children • Long-Term • Frequent Contact • Specified Nature and Location of Activity • Supervised

Design and Methodology

To begin to understand both the processes involved and the impact of mentoring within each of the five parts of the typology, a single program representing each type was selected. Within each program up to four mentees were selected as described below.

Interviews were conducted with mentoring program staff about four pairs of mentees and mentors, and with the mentor, the mentee, and another significant adult who has first-hand information about the relationship (e.g., parent, teacher, guardian). In this way, the data becomes triangulated and provides the researcher with multiple perspectives. Each step in the methodology is described below.

The typology was presented to and reviewed by Buddy System agency staff members during plenary sessions of the Buddy System and they were invited to nominate programs to participate in the study. In addition, a description of the study and a call for participation was mailed to all Buddy System members. The Technical Assistance committee recommended programs based on probable willingness to participate, and longevity and stability of the program. These programs were contacted and invited to participate. While many were eager and able to participate, others required numerous contacts and/or were unable to commit their program to participation. After several attempts to solicit participation from a number of different short-term focused programs, selection of programs representing all five archetypes was completed.

Once a program had volunteered and been selected for participation in the study, we asked program staff to suggest particular pairs which met criteria based on staff expectations and how well the match worked. While one might assume that we would study only ideal matches, we believed that we could learn valuable information about some of the critical elements of effective mentoring by studying matches which did not work

as well as staff had expected. Consequently, within a given program we asked program staff to select pairs in which:

(1) the relationship worked well, as staff expected
(2) the relationship worked better than staff expected
(3) the relationship did not work as well as staff expected
(4) a random pair

While we were not always able to get this exact balance within a given program, efforts were made in this direction and representatives from each type of relationship are included in the study.

Once interviews with program staff were completed and potential pairs identified, the process for setting up interviews with the mentors, mentees, and parent(s)/guardians or other significant adult was undertaken. Each program required a different process for setting up interviews: different letters, different initial contact people within the schools, different methods for getting permission slips returned, lack of responsiveness or in some cases, inability to track down or telephone participants, all required substantial time obligations and resulted in significant delays in data collection.

We began by interviewing mentors first in order to provide a context for the mentee and other adult interviews. In addition to being easiest to contact and set up, mentor interviews often provided the best, and in some cases the only, access to mentees since some mentees did not have home telephones or had moved at least once in recent months.

Contact was made with all 20 mentors, and 17 mentor interviews were completed. A few mentors refused to participate or did not return multiple telephone calls. Two of the mentors who did not participate were in a mentoring relationship which staff characterized as not working as well as they had anticipated. This may account for unresponsiveness.

Nineteen of 20 mentees were contacted (one did not have a telephone and could not be tracked down) but only 11 mentee interviews were completed. There were a variety of reasons for

this low number of mentee interviews. In some cases, parents did not return permission slips even with additional follow-up, telephones were disconnected with no forwarding numbers, and several of the mentees refused to return telephone calls even with parent encouragement and support.

Contact was made with 19 of 20 "other significant adults." The inability to contact one adult was due to a disconnected telephone; no forwarding information was available. Thirteen interviews were completed with parents, guardians and teachers.

In all, 46 of the 65 projected interviews were completed (71%), including staff interviews from 5 program types. While the completion rate was not as high as we would have preferred, in general there were substantial similarities among mentoring relationships within programs of the same type. The most serious limitation lies in the long-term focused activity program type in which only 5 interviews were completed. This was due to unresponsiveness or unwillingness of mentees and parent(s)/guardians to participate. It should be noted that these mentees were juniors and seniors in high school, have jobs in addition to school, and were contacted late in the spring, perhaps too close to the end of the school year.

It is important to recognize that only four pairs were selected for interviews from each archetype. Consequently, generalizations about program types are limited for a study of this scope. However, as was indicated earlier, there was, to a large extent, homogeneity in experiences, relationships between mentors and mentees, and descriptions of programmatic processes (e.g., screening, matching and training), by people within programs of a given archetype.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

This section of the report describes the programs which participated in the study. They are categorized by program type. Each section includes a brief overview description, a more detailed summary of programmatic processes including screening, matching, pre-match training, and follow-up training and support. A description of the nature of the mentor and mentee relationships, impacts on mentees and mentors, and a few words about the relationships of mentors with the family of mentees are also summarized.

Occasional recommendations or suggestions which were given by participants are included where appropriate. The conclusions and observations of the research team are summarized in the last section of this report.

Direct quotes from study participants are embedded in the body of this text and are reported in italics.

TRADITIONAL PROGRAM

This category encompasses programs which many think of as the typical type of mentoring program: one adult in a friendship oriented role model relationship with one child. It is the Big Brother/Big Sister type of program model. The traditional mentoring program in this study involved one adult matched with one child who, in most instances, was from a family with a single head of household due oftentimes to the death of a parent or divorce of parents. These matches involved a one year commitment from mentors but matches frequently lasted several years; staff indicated the average length of a match is about 4 years. Mentors are expected to meet with their mentees a minimum of three hours per week. According to the program brochure, this program *"matches kids who need an extra measure of friendship with adults who have plenty of caring to give."*

This is a fairly large program with 55 active pairs with boys and girls ranging from 6 to 18 years of age. The program has been in existence for 18 years.

A range of reasons for mentee participation in this program and descriptions of mentees were given. Perhaps not surprisingly, there often was not consensus between the parent/guardian, mentee and mentor about why the young person had been referred to the program. While the mentee in one pair thought the reason she had become involved was because,

> *My family thought I was bored and was troubled. I didn't have any friends. I wouldn't talk about anything, particularly my feelings. (mentee, traditional program)*

Her guardians, who are her grandparents, said it was because she was growing up with older adults, and needed someone closer to her age.

Another mentor described her mentee this way:

> *She is outgoing, she can be a lot of fun and very appreciative but she is closed emotionally and has trouble controlling her behavior, for instance she swears at her teacher and doesn't do well at school. She has*

been beaten down so much. She's a real good kid trapped in a dysfunctional family. (mentor, traditional program)

PROGRAMMATIC PROCESSES: SCREENING, MATCHING, PRE-MATCH TRAINING, AND FOLLOW-UP TRAINING AND SUPPORT

This traditional program, like many of it's kind, has an extensive application process. In this agency, there are three interviews which involve not only the volunteer coordinator but a trained social worker. The first interview with the prospective mentor lasts approximately two hours during which the volunteer coordinator and social worker discuss the volunteer's expectations of, and motivations for, volunteering, their family background and history, attitudes toward young people, as well as other personal in-depth issues of this nature.

Following this interview, staff assess the volunteer and review possible matches. Once a young person is identified, the volunteer and staff meet with the mentor and separately, with the mentee, to discuss their feelings about this potential match. If everyone agrees, a highly organized interview is conducted with the social worker, the volunteer coordinator, the mentor, the mentee and the mentee's guardian or parent. The volunteer coordinator, the mentor, and mentee meet together to set goals, take photographs and discuss their backgrounds and interests. Simultaneously, the social worker meets with the parent(s) or guardians. If, at any time, the social worker who generally advocates for the parent(s) or guardians, and the volunteer coordinator, who advocates for the mentee and mentor, perceive any problems, these are discussed at length and a re-evaluation occurs. If all are in agreement, the mentor and mentee exchange addresses and phone numbers and set up their first meeting together.

The mentors references are checked, and the program completes a Bureau of Criminal Apprehension check, a retroactive Bureau of Criminal Apprehension check, and a driver's license check. Following these objective screening mechanisms, intuition and judgment play a major role in

assessing the appropriateness of a volunteer's participation in this program. Personal problems, family issues, and unhealthy motivations for volunteering are some of the criteria used to screen volunteers.

Matching the mentor with a mentee is guided by a variety of factors including interests, hobbies, age of child or mentor, personality types, etc. Mentors, mentees and parents or guardians felt very strongly that this program does a very thorough and excellent job at matching mentors and mentees. Mentors described the intake process as very long and in-depth but all mentors felt very good and confident about the application, interviewing, and matching processes. Many said that the level of intensity indicated a strong level of commitment to making the best matches. When asked what was the greatest strength of the program, staff and participants alike cited the matching process.

One of the mentors had to wait a year between her initial application and a match with a mentee. She felt all right about this lengthy wait, however, because, she said, it made her feel confident that the program was being very "picky" about a good match and, in her words:

> *The program has a strong commitment to having [mentors] who will not abandon their [mentees] since trust and relationship stability is often an issue for [mentees]. (mentor, traditional program)*

Because this program focuses on friendship or role modeling, no new skills are perceived to be needed and consequently, limited pre-match training is available. However, guidance is given about types of appropriate activities and parameters of the relationship during the initial interviews and overviews. Mentors stated that they did not feel a need for additional pre-match training.

Substantial follow-up training and support is available for mentors. Program staff call mentors once a week for the first few months and once per month on an on-going basis, even for

those matches who have been together for 10 years. In addition, there are meetings every month for mentors which last approximately two hours, during which an in-service is provided on topics ranging from active listening, self esteem, problem solving techniques, and sexuality, to name but a few. Time for discussing concerns and sharing strategies or approaches to handling difficult situations is also made available during these monthly inservices.

Mentees have an opportunity to get together and work on a quarterly newsletter and occasionally do community service projects with senior citizens. Mentors and mentees have opportunities to get together socially with other pairs several times throughout the year. The social worker is in contact with the parent or guardian approximately once per month. Because this mentoring program is part of a larger human service agency which provides physical, mental and emotional therapy and support, they have an educational approach with some of the parents, many of whom are clients of the agency. Every six months the parent/guardian, mentee, mentor, volunteer coordinator and social worker meet to evaluate the relationship and address any concerns which may have arisen.

Program staff indicated that ongoing contact with parents and individual follow-up support and supervision for mentors was critical in keeping a balance and a pulse on developing issues or concerns. Mentors are thankful for the follow-up. They describe using this time to discuss current questions about whether they handled a particular situation appropriately and what they might do differently next time or what should be done next.

Description of Relationship

Mentors are advised not to spend money on mentees and not to do anything out of the ordinary with their mentees—the message is that mentors are adult friends, not someone who buys them special things or takes them expensive places. Mentors and mentees appear to adhere to this advice. They do

things like fly kites, eat dinner together, go to movies and museums, go fishing, run errands together, watch television, play basketball or pool, etc. They do lots of everyday things together, "just hang out together" as was often the response from mentees. Typically, they call each other a couple of times per week and get together once every week to ten days.

Without exception, the mentors and mentees in this program describe their relationship as meaningful, substantial and important to them. They talked about their relationship in these ways:

She is my missing piece. My missing sister. She is my friend. (mentee, traditional program)

He's cool. He's just so good. He's funny. If he has something serious to say, he'll say it. If he's joking around I can tell. (mentee, traditional program)

She encourages me. She listens to me. She listens to me more than my family or even my counselor. (mentee, traditional program)

[Mentor] is the one in my life who I can talk to. (mentee, traditional program)

I like getting together with [mentor] because there's no one else like him in my life. (mentee, traditional program)

She's like a real sister since I'm an only child. (mentee, traditional program)

I love him 'cause we've gotten to know each other and like each other. (mentee, traditional program)

I really respect [mentee]. She is so wise. I often just sit and listen to her and recognize the profoundness of her observations about people and life. She has seen so much and gone through much more than I have. I really enjoy the relationship and feel grateful for the opportunity. (mentor, traditional program)

I know [mentee] loves [mentor]. She really loves her. It's a match made in heaven. So many similar interests. [Mentor] encourages her talents to the best of [mentee's] abilities. (mentee's guardian, traditional program)

They're like brothers. They're like friends. They enjoy each other's company. (parent, traditional program)

IMPACT ON MENTEE

Most mentors had a very difficult time talking about the impact they have had on their mentees, not so much because they could not see improvements in the attitudes or behaviors of their mentees, but rather, because they do not view their relationship as anything out of the ordinary. They talked about the naturalness of their relationships in these ways:

I'm not a mentor. A mentor is a philosopher and very wise. (mentor, traditional program)

We're not really in this for progress. There's no great goal. Just to <u>be</u> with her, just to be a friend to her. (underline added to indicate speaker's emphasis) (mentor, traditional program)

Mentors were asked to rate the benefit or impact they believe they had on their mentees. Given a range of options from "not at all," "a little," "pretty much," and "a lot," mentors said their mentees had benefited either pretty much or a lot. Similarly, when asked to rate the benefit of the program on the mentee on a scale from 0 (extremely negative) to 10 (extremely positive), the average was 9.3. Mentors, mentees, and parent/guardians described impact in these ways:

I feel as though I <u>can</u> make a difference in her life, that I <u>do</u> have the opportunity to influence her in a positive way. She now has 'crossed over' to a more stable approach to life and I feel like I can be a healthy, helpful, supportive part of that. (underline added to indicate *speaker's* emphasis) *(mentor, traditional program)*

It's improved his ability to communicate and deal with others. He's better able to express himself. I can see this

in our outings. He's better able to have a conversation. He's able to express his feelings more. (mentor, traditional program)

He's able to experience interactions between a husband and wife. He's learned positive ways to enjoy himself and entertain himself. (mentor, traditional program)

Her self respect with boys—she stands up for herself now, she believes she deserves better. (mentor, traditional program)

He's learned manners like table manners in a restaurant, talking on the phone politely. (mentor, traditional program)

I express my ideas better both in my art and verbally. I used to keep my ideas basically inside and I just start letting them go now. She encourages and listens to me. I talk about how I'm feeling, what's on my mind. (mentee, traditional program)

She helps me in school. She strongly encourages me to do well. (mentee, traditional program)

Friendship. I feel better about myself. If I'm depressed, I know [mentor] will always be there. I can't loose [mentor]. I can talk to him about problems. (mentee, traditional program)

She's more confident. She enjoys it. They can talk. They share things that I don't think she shares with anyone else. (guardian, traditional program)

IMPACT ON MENTOR

While benefiting young people is an obvious goal of mentoring programs, a less frequently discussed and perhaps less obvious outcome is the impact which mentoring has on mentors. Using the same rating scale of 0 to 10, with 10 being extremely positive, the average mentor rating on impact or benefit to themselves was 10.0. Involvement in mentoring was described in these ways:

It's like when you take a piece of clay and you mold it, like an artist finishing a picture or a sculpture, you get a sense of satisfaction. She's very giving and loving and wants to help, nothing selfish. (guardian, traditional program)

I get a great deal of satisfaction doing something worthwhile. It's training for life in general. Happiness. I find the relationship enjoyable, especially since I have no children of my own. I feel the relationship adds to my life. (mentor, traditional program)

Relationship with Family

In this program, a strong boundary is purposefully created between the parent/guardians and the mentor; the mentor is discouraged from interacting or discussing the mentee at length with the mentee's family. It is this program's belief that the primacy of the relationship between the mentor and the mentee must be clear and that a significant or substantial relationship between the mentor and the mentee's family might confuse and diffuse the mentor and mentee's relationship.

Reaction to lack of family and mentor involvement was met with mixed reviews. Some mentors enjoyed not having an expectation that they would become close to the mentee's family. One mentor said she purposefully kept herself distant from the family and the family situation even though she felt they had tried to pull her in and get her involved. In general, the mentees were satisfied with the level of involvement, which was minimal, between mentor and family. One of the parent/guardians, however, said that if things are going well, no communication is fine, but that if a problem arises, the mentor should tell the family and vice versa.

Long-Term, Focused-Activities Program

Similar to traditional mentoring programs, this program type requires a one year commitment from mentors, six hours per month, and involves a one to one relationship between an adult volunteer and a young person. In contrast to traditional programs, however, programs of this type focus on a particular goal or outcome, over and above friendship or role modeling. Program goals are often focused on academic tutoring or achievement, or work related experience and skills. They are sometimes compensatory or remedial in nature, as in tutoring programs for under-achieving students, but often are designed to build on existing skills and abilities in order to encourage or promote progress academically or in terms of career exploration and skills.

The coordinator from the long-term, focused activities type of program which participated in this study described their program in this way: *"This is a year round comprehensive social and academic program to foster achievement of students. The overall goal is to increase the likelihood that these youths will participate meaningfully in post-secondary educational opportunities."* This program works primarily with juniors and seniors in high school who are "tenacious youth" who want help with post-secondary educational options. It focuses on school and work and has an internship component for students. Mentors and mentees are expected to attend 1 to 2 program-sponsored workshops every month. They are encouraged to contact each other between workshops, either in person or by telephone.

Students tend to be economically disadvantaged, 60-75% African American, 10-12% Asian American and many come from single-parent or, as the coordinator described, "no-parent" homes. They are usually referred to the program by counselors or teachers from 13 different public and private high schools in and around the metro area. Mentors are recruited through corporate commitments to promote volunteerism or by word of mouth.

This program was initially instituted about six years ago and is currently undergoing substantial changes in program focus and structure in order to begin working with younger, junior high school students. They currently have 25 active pairs and many unmatched students with whom they continue to work extensively.

It should be noted that only seven interviews were completed with participants and staff of this program, including three mentors, two parents, one mentee, and one staff person. Contact was made with three additional mentees but they either chose not to participate in the study or did not return telephone calls. One of these mentees had never met fact to face with the mentor and consequently had little incentive to participate.

PROGRAMMATIC PROCESSES: SCREENING, MATCHING, PRE-MATCH TRAINING, AND FOLLOW-UP TRAINING AND SUPPORT

In contrast to traditional programs which have unsupervised, generally more personal relationships between mentors and mentees and require an in-depth assessment of mentor motivations, expectations and personal values, the application process for interested mentors in this long-term, focused activity program involves a brief application form and interview. The application asks them about their career area, what made them apply, their youth experience, why they want to mentor, and to describe their hobbies and interests. There is generally an interview, which in some cases occurs over the telephone.

The intake process for mentees includes an interview about their educational and career goals, interests and hobbies, an assessment of reading and writing skills, and an overview of the program. High school transcripts are sent to the program.

Because the primary goal of this program centers around school and work, and less so on friendship or personal growth, and because the only "required" time commitment occurs during program sponsored, directed and supervised workshops, no Bureau of Criminal Apprehension checks are completed for

mentors. One of the parents of a student in this program indicated that she did not know whether there was any screening or a police check, however, she hoped that good screening mechanisms were in place. Mentors and mentees are matched primarily on the basis of similar interests and hobbies, and whenever possible, career interests.

During the summer, prior to the matching of mentors and mentees, there is a picnic for mentors and mentees in the program. A 2-3 hour orientation session for mentors is available in September during which an overview of the program is presented, responsibilities are discussed, and activity sheets which must be completed after every contact, whether in person or over the phone, are reviewed with mentors. Excerpts from a training video are included and developmental aspects of young people are overviewed. In-service training sessions are available for mentors three times per year.

Workshops for mentors and mentees are held one to two times every month. These workshops tend to be school or career-oriented and last approximately two hours. Phone follow-ups are made with mentors and mentees about once a week. Most workshops were perceived as very helpful, particularly for those high school seniors who were college bound. One of the mentors stated a concern about the appropriateness for those mentees who were not college bound of some of the workshops which focused exclusively on applying for post-secondary options.

DESCRIPTION OF RELATIONSHIP

The relationship between a mentor and mentee is designed to center around career and school. The expectation is that mentors will have contact with their mentee outside of the workshops either by phone or in person, in order to discuss any problems regarding school or work. Mentors offer support and advice about how to progress or handle a difficult situation. Mentors and mentees described their relationship in these ways:

I encourage him to follow-through. I talk to him about options and resources, like who to talk to, where to go, what to do. (mentor, long-term, focused activity program)

I may talk to him about how others may see a certain situation, to think about how others feel or perceive it, a different reality check. (mentor, long-term, focused activity program)

She really helped me figure out the college enrollment parts and process. If someone was giving me the run around, she'd help me work the system. If it weren't for her I probably would have taken a few months...well...maybe a few years off. (mentee, long-term, focused activity program)

We meet twice a month, mostly during program meetings, but sometimes we go out to eat. We work on financial aid forms, preparing for SATs, all college related. We have a good relationship. She's a good friend to have. (mentee, long-term, focused activity program)

Concurrent with program goals which are career and education focused, this program does not discourage nor does it programmatically encourage a personal relationship between the mentor and mentee outside of the parameters of the program focus or activities. While it is likely that this is a selling point for many mentors who prefer this type of focused involvement, all of those who were interviewed made an appeal for an opportunity to become more personally connected to their partners.

Most mentors get involved because they want to help a kid, develop a relationship with them and the program doesn't help facilitate this very well—some mentors never even met face to face with their mentees. (mentor, long-term, focused activity program)

One of the mentors who was selected to be interviewed because her match did not work as well as staff had anticipated

or hoped, was one of the mentors who had never met face to face with the mentee with whom she had been matched. In fact, she felt as though the biggest roadblock for this program was the potential for "tenacious" young people to be very busy with other programs for young people, with work, with school, or other commitments.

There appears to be a wide range of level of personal involvement between mentors and mentees which seems to be contingent upon the preferences, openness, and willingness of both the mentor and mentee. One of the mentors who was interviewed described a relationship with his mentee which was, in fact, not at all focused on post-secondary opportunities; rather, this mentor became the adult in the mentee's life who provided some sense of stability and opportunity.

> *He knows I care, that I'm concerned, that I listen. He needs to focus on surviving and getting through high school, not focusing on college. He has been sexually and physically abused, his father is an alcoholic—he wants to escape, get out of his home situation, and thus wants to get a job so he can move out. (mentor, long-term, focused activity program)*

Impact on Mentee

Benefits of participation to mentees were significant and diverse and included attitudinal changes about the value of education, new work skills, employment opportunities which would not have been made available to entry-level workers, clearer goals, resume writing and interviewing skills, etc. On a scale of 0 to 10 with 10 being extremely positive and 0 being extremely negative, the average rating of impact on mentee was 7.5 Those who were interviewed talked about the impact on mentees in these ways:

> *[Mentor] played a large role in getting him to understand that education is important. I watched an attitude change in [mentee]. She was a good role model for him, she helped him understand the skills he needed to be successful, assisted him in identifying goals. Before he*

used to skip a lot of classes—I just watched his behavior and attitudes about school change. She's a good model for him because she's a professional in the field he wants to get into, she has high expectations and standards for herself and him, yet she recognizes that youth today have a lot going against them. (mother, long-term, focused activity program)

He got an opportunity to see what the real world was like. He probably would not have had the opportunity to work at the level he was able to. (mother, long-term, focused activity program)

I was beginning to wonder whether he was going to make it through high school this year and his mentor influenced him substantially. (mother, long-term, focused activity program)

The program offers maturity to uprising teenagers into a professional field. (mentee, long-term, focused activity program)

He got an opportunity to work in accounting, in a professional field. Before he only worked in a restaurant. He's been exposed to staff talking about how they grew up with many hardships and he gets to see he too has options and hope. He feels valued, cared about. (mentor, long-term, focused activity program)

She learned about the importance of working to make things happen, instead of waiting. She was told she could not get into a certain program but went after it anyway and got in! She's doing much better in school, she's more organized, there's been real change. (mentor, long-term, focused activity program)

IMPACT ON MENTOR

All of the mentors described enjoying their role as mentor and what they got out of mentoring appeared to vary somewhat with the level of involvement with their individual mentee. Overall, the average rating of impact on mentors was 7.7. The mentor whose match did not result in face to face contact had been previously matched successfully. Mentors talked about their experiences in these ways:

I enjoyed seeing a student get to that point and stage in their life and do well, and to help them realize it is possible to succeed in life and that things are not going to just come to you. I felt like I could be of assistance in someone's growth and success. (mentor, long-term, focused activity program)

I suppose if someone really got into it, you'd find that perhaps I felt as though I had failed in some ways as a parent but still had something to give a child, to help a young person. (mentor, long-term, focused activity program)

RELATIONSHIP WITH FAMILY

There was either no or minimal involvement between the mentee's family and program staff or mentors. The coordinator indicated that the parent component was her greatest concern about the program. Similarly, one of the parents said she would have liked to have met the mentor at the same time that her son met the mentor.

Short-Term, Focused-Activities Program

Similar to long-term, focused activity programs, mentoring programs within this category are focused in a particular area like school or careers but do not require mentors to make more than a 6 month commitment. The short-term focused activity program which was involved in this study was a school-based tutoring program for students K-12 who need help in an academic area. The mentors commit to 2 hours per week for 10 weeks and generally tutor 1 to 2 students throughout that time period.

This program has volunteers in 67 schools in the district and has been in existence for 25 years. The volunteer coordinator estimates that there are currently 400 non-college volunteers, 400 college volunteers, and 1200 students involved in this program.

Structurally, this program has a coordinator at the district level, liaisons within the schools, and teachers, working as a team. The program coordinator recruits and trains volunteers to become school liaisons and tutors. She does initial screening and intake, as well as the orientation and overview of the program. The school liaisons place volunteers with teachers and provide a site-based link between teachers, volunteers, and the district.

Generally, the students who are referred by a teacher to participate in this program *"need a little extra boost. It's the kids in the middle, those who don't qualify for special services, not special education, not refugee services, and have untapped potential,"* according to the coordinator.

Programmatic Processes: Screening, Matching, Pre-Match Training, and Follow-Up Training and Support

Because this program is a tutoring program with very focused expectations and the pair are always directly or indirectly supervised in the school building, processes for screening, matching and training are significantly less involved and rigorous than either the long-term focused activity program or the traditional programs. Potential volunteers complete an application and submit references which are checked by program staff. There are no Bureau of Criminal Apprehension checks

since all program activities are supervised and occur within the school building.

There is a two hour orientation session for new tutors which overviews the program and briefly describes expectations and relationship considerations like cultural biases, communication, and setting healthy boundaries and limits. The school-based liaison is expected to meet with the volunteer at the school, upon placement.

The program provides training for the school liaisons at least quarterly. These liaisons are volunteers from the community. Training for teachers is on an as-needed basis. Teachers are expected to provide some guidance and direction for the volunteer tutors, otherwise no additional training or follow-up is available on an ongoing basis.

The school district in which this program is located is moving toward a site-based management approach and consequently, this model of having one person within each school be the community liaison between tutors and the needs of teachers and students is synchronous with the district-wide movement. However, since the liaisons for this program are volunteers, the level of involvement, commitment, and skill is uneven among the schools. Most of the concerns about the program by the coordinator and the mentors revolved around the role of the liaison in the schools and the site-based nature of the program. For instance, the coordinator expressed concern about the fact that the success of the program within each school building is highly dependent on the skills and leadership of the liaison, yet, because the liaison is a volunteer from the community, expectations regarding time commitments and skill level must be minimal. In those schools where community liaisons are paid, the follow-through and leadership is more consistent.

Data from interviewers support this concern about consistency. While some mentors were satisfied with the direction and feedback received from the teacher and liaison, other mentors said they had never met their school liaison and

needed help with such things as: knowing how to work with teachers to develop a common understanding of role and expectations, how to work within the school building, who to go to if there is a problem with a teacher or a student, etc. There was often a sense from mentors that the teachers were so busy that they could not be expected to help substantially with problem-solving around particular students. Without a strong liaison, a sense of connectedness and support was less likely to occur.

Description of Relationship

Tutors for this program tend to be of four basic types: college students interested in teaching, senior citizens, parents of students in the school, and community volunteers at large. Reasons for volunteering in the school and levels of education and experience varied significantly among volunteers. Consequently, their roles in the classroom were quite different and thus will be reported and summarized individually, rather than in aggregate.

One volunteer had children at the elementary school in which she volunteered. She had been a volunteer in this program for 6 years and works with 2-3 students, 15-20 minutes each, twice a week. While there are some students with whom she works regularly, other students are referred on an as needed basis.

The teacher had a folder for each tutor in which the teacher had prepared a lesson plan for each of the students the volunteer was to tutor on that particular day. Following the tutoring session the volunteer reported progress and concerns for each of the students and the teacher gave comments and suggestions prior to the volunteer's next visit. This mentor highly recommended this level of feedback and communication between the volunteer and teacher. She said, *"The teacher reads what you've written and listens to what you're saying and lets you know that you're making a difference."*

This tutor was asked to discuss a relationship with one of the students with whom she worked on a regular basis.

This student had never written cursive before, even though she's in the fourth grade. Sometimes she's on task and sometimes she's in a daze, totally inaccessible, she's struggling so hard. I helped her with her first research report. At first, the student didn't have a clue about how to do this and the thing is, she didn't have anybody to ask at home. We worked on it for months. She was so proud she invited me to the reading of the report in class. She was so confident and felt so good about her report. (mentor, short-term, focused activity program)

Another volunteer in this program helped in a high school, sometimes with the whole class, at other times with small groups or individuals. Occasionally, he had been given responsibility for an entire class period or lesson. In many ways, he was being utilized much the same as a student teacher. This worked well for this volunteer since his motivation for tutoring was because he was considering returning to college for a teaching certificate. He talked about his role in this way:

Kids don't see me as an authority figure who can take them to the principal's office so they feel free to talk to me in the halls and more casually. They feel more comfortable with me, see me more as a brother, friend, someone who they don't feel intimidated by and they're not afraid to ask me things. I'm someone there to spend a little more individual time with them. They ask me about myself and what I did over the week-end and what my plans for college are. (mentor, short-term focused activity program)

The last mentor who was interviewed from this program was a college student. She was a mentor in an alternative high school, and worked both individually with students and occasionally in small groups. She focused her efforts primarily in language arts, since her major in college was English. She had worked substantially with one student, in particular, on a major writing project and described their relationship in this way:

It's a task-oriented friendship. We talk easily, there's a level of trust established. If we're not working on something, we have casual conversations. (mentor, short-term focused activity program)

IMPACT ON MENTEE

The average rating of impact of the program on students was 7.0, on a 10-point scale. Even when one-to-one time was limited, volunteers, students, and teachers reported significant benefits to this program. Teachers said that the individual help that these volunteers can give to students was invaluable and critical to the overall progress of these students. One of the teachers talked about it in this way:

These students are so desperate for attention. [Mentee's] mother is not lucid. They live in extreme poverty with only the bare essentials. [Mentee] cannot read or write. [Mentee's] mother thinks he's mentally handicapped, when in fact he's not and she refuses to see that her kid has potential. I feel both mentors were wonderful and extremely helpful. We need more volunteers. (teacher, short-term focused activity program)

Mentors and mentees talked about how it felt to be able to give and receive that little bit of additional time and attention:

She always gives me a hug when she sees me. I'm somebody she looks forward to seeing, who gives her lots of positive strokes, someone who likes her. I'm someone who just focuses on her and does it again and again with some continuity, who gives her a lot of good strokes for even small accomplishments. (mentor, short-term focused activity program)

I encouraged the student to go on to college. I gave her some basic English skills, self esteem, helped her to have someone to encourage her thinking skills. (mentor, short-term focused activity program)
The college students are excellent role models for the students in this alternative school. [Mentor] brought

new ideas and resources with her. (teacher, short-term focused activity program)

[Mentor] understands me. She doesn't criticize my radical thoughts. She doesn't ask me to change my ideas, she just corrected the English. [Mentor] got me excited about writing. Things went really well. She helped me to realize that I could do something, that my writing was important. [Mentor] was a role model for me. After working with her, I'd like to do something like that—focusing on kids who are having problems in certain areas. (underline added to indicate speaker's emphasis) (mentee, short-term focused activity program)

He talks to you more, like asks what's up, and stuff like that. He encourages you. He's an all around nice guy. He's still young like us. (mentee, short-term focused activity program)

I like getting together with the tutor 'cause she's nice, she's easy to talk to. When she comes I get out of reading class and I like that. I like to see her and I get more work done. She helps me. (mentee, short-term focused activity program)

IMPACT ON MENTOR

Mentors rated the impact or benefit of the program on themselves at 8.3 on a 10 point scale. In some cases, it gave them the experience they were looking for in order to help them make career decisions. In other cases, the impact was more personal. One of the mentors talked about it in this way:

She writes me lots of letters, mostly thank-you letters, totally unsolicited by the teacher or me. And, when you get those letters that are so hard for her to write and you know she did it because she wanted to...(mentor, short-term focused activity program)

RELATIONSHIP WITH FAMILY

Since teachers were perceived as having the most relevant information on impact of this tutoring program on students, teachers, not parents, were interviewed. In most cases, school social workers and teachers did not believe that parents even knew that their child was involved in this program.

Although there was no contact between families and the volunteers in this program, tutors seemed to have talked somewhat with students about their family lives. Similarly, students talked about having mentioned their tutors to their friends and family. Mentors did not feel a need to meet parents but did feel as though some background information might, in some circumstances, have been helpful by way of explanation of student's behavior, attitudes, or knowledge and skill level.

TEAM MENTORING

Team mentoring occurs when more than one adult volunteer works with a young person. This may include a family or two (or more) unrelated adults working together. The team mentoring program which participated in this study currently has 90 matches between children, 5-15 years old, and a mentor family. The children are from families with one head of household and are often low income. The children are in need of role models, usually male, are from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, and often have had significant levels of abuse or neglect in their family situations.

Like traditional mentoring programs, mentors are expected to get together with their mentees once per week for 2-4 hours. Mentors make a year long commitment to the program but regularly remain involved for several years. The relationships are friendship based and mentors are encouraged to do everyday types of activities with their mentees which don't cost money.

PROGRAMMATIC PROCESSES: SCREENING, MATCHING, PRE-MATCH TRAINING, AND FOLLOW-UP TRAINING AND SUPPORT

The program coordinator conducts initial screening over the telephone. He determines whether they live in the program's service area, describes the program, and asks them about their motivation for mentoring, i.e., why do they want to mentor? Approximately 10-20 percent are screened out at this phase. Those who seem appropriate and are still interested are invited to complete an application which requests three references. References are checked as is the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension.

An orientation is offered for all potential mentors. This session covers program guidelines and descriptions, typical pitfalls and tips for mentors, and expectations and responsibilities. Following this, a final interview is conducted with the mentors which focuses on personal issues and stability, e.g., family of origin issues, values, current support system, etc.

Matches are based on geographic location, interests, expectations, comfort, personalities, *"real simple stuff"* as the

director explains. Once a potential match is found, the mentors, mentee, program staff and mentee's parent/guardian meet together, typically at the mentee's home. They discuss expectations and interests as well as any potential concerns. If all are in agreement, the mentor proceeds by setting up a time to pick up the mentee.

Limited information about how to be a good mentor is given to mentors during initial interviews. Mentors did not feel a particular need for more extensive training. As one mentor indicated, *"We had 3 children of our own so we really didn't need training. Couples without children might need training."* During the first several months, phone contact is made with the mentor at least once a month and a follow-up log is kept for each child.

Inservices for mentors are available on a quarterly basis and address issues relevant to child development, relationship building skills, and general tips for problem-solving with children. These inservices also serve a support group function for mentors. While it appears that many mentors do not utilize the inservice training, they feel very supported by staff because, *"all we have to do is call staff anytime there is a problem."* Others appreciated the group training and found it helpful. The follow-up also established a norm of accountability, according to one mentor. The program has a regular newsletter and other mailed updates which keep mentors abreast of new activities or opportunities available to mentors and mentees at low or no cost.

Description of Relationship

Since the children in this program come from single head of household families, many of which are headed by women, many of the boys in the program are in need of a male role model. While the mentee develops relationships with all members of the family, they often have a special more intense relationship with the father of the mentor family.

The general sense of the relationship between mentees and mentor families was that the mentee was part of an extended family. For the most part, the mentees did not appear to do anything particularly special or out of the ordinary with their mentor families. And yet, the depth of the relationships and feelings for each other is obvious in their descriptions of the relationship:

> *[The mentee] is part of our family. We will be here for him as long as he wants. He's easy to entertain and to have around. He helps out. (mentor, team mentoring program)*

> *I'm an adult friend. We go to the park, rake leaves, hang out at home, maybe go to the circus, do things with the family, play football. (mentor, team mentoring program)*

> *[The mentor] is like a second parent because my son doesn't have a man in his life to help him grow up. (parent, team mentoring program)*

> *Really nice friends. Sort of like a friend family, sort of like an extra family. It's like a reward for being good all week—something I really look forward to. (mentee, team mentoring program)*

> *[Mentor] takes me to his work and I play on the computer and stuff but I like being with the family more. (mentee, team mentoring program)*

> *They take me to church, camping, sometimes I spend the night. They're nice. I feel good thinking about them and all the fun we've had. (mentee, team mentoring program)*

Impact on Mentee

In general, mentors had a very difficult time admitting or assessing the impact their relationship had on their mentee. Much like the mentors in traditional programs, these mentors were quite modest and unable or unwilling to say that they had much impact. The average mentor rating of impact on mentee

was 6.3, as compared with the average parent rating of impact of 10.0. Overall, the average was 7.8.

When asked directly to describe impact or benefit, mentors sometimes said that there was none, that they didn't do anything special. However, one could cull out mentee outcomes from other parts of the interview.

> *This relationship is so special. If everybody helped just one child...He levels with me about things that are important to him. I see him smile and feel like he's part of our family, an extended family. When his parents divorced, we became his mainstay. (mentor, team mentoring program)*

> *He's more truthful now, more willing to use manners, more interested in school and books and reading since we began taking him to the library and reading to him extensively. He sees a family like ours with a husband and wife, father and son and baby. He's more open to physical contact and affection. He sees alternative family patterns and lifestyles, how to deal with conflicts differently. (mentor, team mentoring program)*

> *I'd miss them if I didn't see them! It's like, I'm more responsible now, more depended on to do stuff like sometimes I buckle up the [mentor's] baby in the car seat, or [the mentor's] kids ask me to get stuff for them 'cause they can't reach it and I'm older. (mentee, team mentoring program)*

> *I'm nicer now. I used to be bad before. Like I'd throw rocks at cars and I learned not to steal. I got caught stealing and [mentor] read me a book about stealing and talked to me about. (mentee, team mentoring program)*

> *They make me happy! (mentee, team mentoring program)*

> *He's a special male friend who is able to give [mentee] special attention, someone for him to talk to. He looks forward to their outings. It's a chance for him to do "boy things" with an adult male. It's a chance for him to see a male interacting in a family setting and especially seeing how a relationship involves cooperation and both*

individuals having responsibilities. He is showing a different attitude, more mature. He's more likely to get involved in an activity even if he's unsure if he will be successful—it improved his self esteem. Before, he was reluctant or defiant in getting involved in anything but what he knew he would be successful at. Through [mentor's] gentle manner, he gives [mentee] things to think about. [Mentor] shares chores with his wife. He picks up on this including the fact that washing dishes is not just women's work! (parent, team mentoring program)

They have a very good relationship. [Mentee] feels very good with [mentor]. He opens up to him and really respects him, values his opinion immensely. He really wants [mentor] to care about him. I see him getting ready on Saturday mornings. (parent, team mentoring program)

He gets to see a husband and wife who are treating each other with respect. They're good role models. They're positive, loving, affirming, it's a nurturing environment. It's good for him to see that they can respect each other and be soulmates. He's learned that it's okay for a man to show that he has feelings and can demonstrate that he cares, that women are equals. Now he cares for younger kids, he'll be real warm and caring to them. I see [mentors] as a kind of restoration process for [mentee]. (parent, team mentoring program)

IMPACT ON MENTOR

Mentors rated the impact or benefit of this relationship on themselves at an average of 9.3 on a 10 point scale. At the end of one interview with a mentor couple who had three young children, I asked the parents what they thought their children thought of the mentee and how they had prepared their children for the mentee's entrance into their lives. They thought about it for awhile and said that they had not really explained much of anything to them and that the children just accepted him into their lives. At that moment, their oldest child, a girl about 6-7 years old, came into the living room. The parents asked her if

she knew why the mentee came to their house so often. She replied, *"Why, because we love him!"*

Relationship with Family

In this program type, the mentees' parents are significantly more knowledgeable about the mentors than other programs in the typology. The first meeting between the mentors and the mentees occurs in the mentee's home with the parent. Some form of communication and relationship appears to continue, in most cases, between the parent and the mentors. Most of the mentors talked about being concerned about the parent and being supportive within stated limits and the parents appear to appreciate an informal relationship.

> *[Mentors] have occasionally helped me get food, get groceries—they've been there for the whole family. She cuts the boys hair, has given me a perm, takes [mentee] to church. (parent, team mentoring program)*

> *I would have liked to have gone out to dinner to talk informally with the mentors when we first met. (parent, team mentoring program)*

> *We would like to have more of a friendship with the mother. We're empathetic to her situation and respect who they are and where they're at. (mentor, team mentoring program)*

GROUP MENTORING

Group mentoring occurs when one adult volunteer works with a small group of young people. Girl Scouts, for instance, is beginning to view their volunteer troop leaders and assistants as mentors. While some would not consider relationships like this to be mentoring, it does utilize adult volunteers in helping or friendship-based relationships with young people.

The mentoring program which participated in this study works with first through eighth grade students in 32 elementary schools with 93 current co-leaders. In this program, adult volunteers co-facilitate with program staff, small groups of children who have been identified by teachers as having behavior problems or inadequate social skills, i.e., they don't get along well with other children or adults. Mentors make a commitment to one group a week, for approximately one hour for the duration of the school year.

The purpose of the groups is to help children understand how others feel and how to get along better with other children. They accomplish this through a conscientious process of group decision-making based on consensus, sharing and support.

PROGRAMMATIC PROCESSES: SCREENING, MATCHING, PRE-MATCH TRAINING, AND FOLLOW-UP TRAINING AND SUPPORT

Since mentors are always supervised and do not meet with mentees outside of the school-based groups, mentors are not screened through the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension. Mentors do participate in two pre-match training and overview sessions. Mentors can be screened out through these first training sessions. Matching is based primarily on scheduling and location of the schools.

There are nine in-service training sessions for mentors. Topics include information about group processes, behavior management, developing appropriate activities, how to end the group, etc. There are extensive guides for mentors and multiple opportunities to discuss any concerns about the children.

DESCRIPTION OF RELATIONSHIP

These groups include an activity and a time for "checking in" (i.e., talking about any problems the mentees have encountered, observations and feedback about behaviors and attitudes, etc.). Mentors participate in both components of the group. They also participate in evaluations of student progress and goal-setting.

All of the people who were interviewed spoke to the utility of these group sessions and the effectiveness of the processes used in the groups.

> *These kids really respond to you. It's an hour in their week when someone says, 'Hey you're doing a really great job.' (mentor, group mentoring program)*
>
> *It's a place where kids can say what they want and not feel threatened. A comfort zone, a group to encourage you. Kids love it! (teacher, group mentoring program)*
>
> *She's nice and agrees with you. If you do something wrong she forgives you. I wish we could meet more often. (mentee, group mentoring program)*
>
> *The group didn't say, 'Hey, you're lying.' And they don't butt in, they let you talk. They ask you how you're doing. (mentee, group mentoring program)*
>
> *She's so positive. She never criticizes anybody. [The mentor] is a very special person in my life. She's very wise and determined to help anyone. She succeeded when my psychiatrist couldn't. (mentee, group mentoring program)*

IMPACT ON MENTEE

The average rating of impact on mentees was 6.3 on a 10 point scale. It should be noted that the question which was asked of mentors asked them to rate the impact of this relationship with the mentees, not the impact of the program. It would be hard to assess an individual impact when groups are co-facilitated and this may have resulted in mentors rating their impact lower than mentors in other programs. However, as in

other programs, the mentors rated the impact significantly lower than the teacher, who rated impact at 8.0. Program participants talked about the outcomes of the relationship between the mentor and the mentees in these ways:

> *It helped me concentrate better in class. She's nice, she believes me. She helps work out the problem and then you don't have the problem anymore. She helps me make friends better. (mentee, group mentoring program)*

> *I follow directions better, I learned how to initiate conversations better, not to brag, how to stay on topic, use appropriate eye contact, and to talk to somebody when something's bothering me. Without this program I would have still been so shy. She helped me learn how to cope. (mentee, group mentoring program)*

> *I really enjoyed my role and time. I feel we really do effect change. Kids are more able to communicate and compromise. (mentor, group mentoring program)*

> *[Mentee] seems more confident. She used to shy away and get defensive with kids. Now she's more relaxed with changes in routine. (teacher, group mentoring program)*

Impact on Mentor

The mentors in this program rated the impact or benefit to themselves of their group mentoring role at 9.5 on a 10 point scale. Mentors were very dedicated to this program and found the time with the children, the structure of the groups and training to be a meaningful and beneficial combination.

Relationship with Family

None of the mentors had met their mentees parents and did not think it would be appropriate to do so. They did find some of the background information about students and their families to be helpful in anticipating problems and in setting goals. While mentors did not feel a need to know mentees family, there does not appear to be a consistent feedback loop to teachers about individual student progress or concerns and this was suggested as an area which could be improved.

Summary of Program Descriptions

Thus far in this report we have described a typology which provides a framework for understanding different types of mentoring programs. We have described in-depth one mentoring program of each archetype in the typology. Mentoring programs were analyzed in terms of their programmatic processes (i.e., screening, matching, pre-match training, and follow-up support and training) and the nature and structure of the relationships which develop between mentors and mentees.

No attempt has been or will be made to judge whether one type of mentoring program is better than another. Our purpose in this section of the report has been to provide the reader with a "thick description" of each mentoring program type and to summarize the ratings of impact by study participants. What becomes abundantly clear is that programs do vary substantially in terms of their processes and goals, and that it is important to understand the differences so one can compare and contrast systematically and objectively across program types.

As Table 1 indicates, programs do differ dramatically in terms of their programmatic processes. Perhaps most similar in terms of processes are the traditional program and the team program. This is not surprising since both are long-term, friendship-oriented programs. One would assume that these program types would require extensive screening and matching. The fact that the traditional program was a division of a social service agency which provides counseling services to clients probably accounts for the more extensive follow-up training and support.

In contrast, the nature and location of activities are specified and supervised in the remaining three program types (long-term focused, short-term focused, and group). Consequently their screening and matching processes are not extensive. The extensive support structures which are indicated for the long-term focused program and the group program type refer primarily to the fact that most or all program activities occur in the presence of program staff and this allows for direct

and ongoing communication with and observation of mentors and mentees. The relative extensiveness of the training for mentors in the group mentoring program is most likely due to the fact that the goals of this particular program are most analogous to a therapeutic intervention approach which would require more training for mentors.

There were two school-based mentoring programs included in this study: the short-term focused tutoring program and the group mentoring program. In both cases, there were building-based contact people who were not staff of these mentoring programs, who acted as intermediaries or liaisons between the mentoring program and the mentors and mentees. As a result, no direct contact or follow-up between program staff and mentees or mentors occurred; contact between the building liaison, and mentees, mentors or teachers varied significantly with the initiative and leadership of the liaison.

An area which has only briefly been mentioned is a description of the mentors involved in these programs. Mentors were recruited from a variety of sources across programs and ranged in age from early 20's to late 60's and 70's; mentors included men and women, college students, and senior citizens, as well as corporate and community volunteers. Mentoring programs recruited mentors from churches and synagogues, businesses, general newspaper advertisement for volunteers, the United Way Volunteer Center, and through the University.

While recruitment was not an area which was specifically studied, an African American mother of a mentee indicated that, *"In the ideal, it would be nice to have more Black males mentoring."* In this particular pair, the mentor and mentee were not of the same race, however, the mother said she found that, *"we can learn things from everybody, no matter what gender or race."*

TABLE 1
SUMMARY OF PROGRAMMATIC PROCESSES BY RANDOM TYPE

	Traditional	Long-term focused	Short-term focused	Team	Group
Screening	E	M	M	E	M
Matching	E	A	M	E	M
Pre-Match Training	M	A	A	A	E
Follow-up Training	E	A	N*	A	E
Support Structures (e.g., follow-up contact, communication system)	E	E	M	E	E
Mentee Follow-up and Support	E	E	N	A	N

Key: N = None; M = Minimal; A = Average; E = Extensive

*Follow-up training is available for volunteer liaisons but not for mentors.

RATINGS OF IMPACT

As Table 2 indicates, impact on mentors and mentees was substantial across program types. When asked to rate impact on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being extremely negative and 10 being extremely positive, averages were well above the midpoint of 5.0. While comparisons between program impact ratings should be viewed with caution since, in some cases, averages are tabulated based on the ratings of only 2 or 3 respondents, it appears that when the nature and location of activity are unspecified and the relationship structure is one to one, as is the case with the traditional mentoring program in this study, the impact on mentees is rated highest. The rating of impact by participants in Team and Long-Term Focused Activity mentoring programs also indicate very high impact on mentees. The additional time commitment involved in both the traditional and team mentoring programs may account for their high ratings. What is perhaps more surprising is the high ratings of the remaining non-friendship oriented programs.

A caveat in interpreting these data is the rating by group mentoring program participants of mentee impact. The question which was asked during interviews related to the impact of <u>their</u> relationship—not the program's impact—on the young person. Since group mentors in this program co-facilitated groups with program staff, it is likely that they were unable or uncomfortable making a distinction between their impact, the impact of the other co-facilitator, or the impact of the overall program. Nonetheless, ratings for mentee impact were significantly above the midpoint of 5.0.

The impact on mentors was also rated very high. In fact, in all cases, impact was rated higher for the mentors than the mentees. The words of the program participants validate and illuminate these high ratings.

The data reported in Table 2 should be interpreted with extreme caution and should not be used as data from which to broadly generalize since the number of respondents is small. The data are included in this report primarily as an indication of the

high ratings of impact from all program participants across program types.

While this section describes and summarizes program processes, relationships and impact, the last section of this report pulls together the recommendations and observations of the research team.

TABLE 2
RATINGS OF IMPACT[1]

	Traditional	Long-term focused	Short-term focused	Team	Group
IMPACT ON MENTEES					
Mentor Ratings	9, 8	8, 8, 6	4, 8, 7	8, 6, 5	6, 5
Other Adult Ratings					
Parents	10, 10	8	9	8, 10, 10	
Teachers					8
Average	**9.3 7.5**	**7.0 7.3**	**6.3**		
IMPACT ON MENTORS					
Mentor Ratings	10, 10	8, 8, 7	9, 8, 8	10, 8, 9	10, 9
Other Adult Ratings					
Parents				10	
Teachers					
Average	**10.0**	**7.7**	**8.3**	**9.3**	**9.5**

[1] 0 = Extremely Negative, 10 = Extremely Positive

Observations and Conclusions

As we move forward in the 1990s there are two simultaneous and perhaps intertwined threads which are weaving their way through the fabric of this country. One focuses on the ever-increasing concern about the numbers of unprepared young people who are entering adulthood and the workforce only to fail and enter the ranks of the disenfranchised and "disempowered." The other is perhaps a response not only to the former concern, but also to the aimlessness and anomie of the previous decades which promoted a focus on one's self and one's self interest—the "me-ism" of the '70s and '80s: this new national thread and trend is a strong, pervasive and ever-increasing commitment to, and active involvement in, volunteerism and community service. Mentoring, or adult volunteers working for the benefit of young people in a direct relationship with them, is one strategy which weaves together both strands.

It is hoped that this report might be used in a variety of ways by a variety of people. We envision that it will provide:

- potential mentors with information about commitment, training and program goals which will help guide their decisions about the type of program in which to volunteer;
- mentoring programs with a systematic way of describing their program, and comparing and contrasting their program with other types of mentoring programs; and
- policy-makers and others interested in mentoring with a framework for understanding mentoring programs and the differential processes, outcomes and goals of mentoring program archetypes.

KEY INGREDIENTS FOR SUCCESS

There were several observations made and lessons learned as a result of conducting this study of mentoring relationships. We have combined the recommendations given by program participants during our interviews, with our observations and analyses, and include them here as some of the key ingredients for successful mentoring programs. These are:

PROVIDE APPROPRIATE SCREENING, MATCHING AND TRAINING.

When mentoring relationships are unsupervised and the nature and location of activities are unspecified by the program, as was the case in the traditional and team mentoring programs in this study, extensive screening and matching is critical. Training is less critical for these friendship oriented program types.

Training is more important when the program goal is remedial, e.g., academic tutoring or increasing social skills. Para-professional skills such as effective teaching methods, increasing motivation in students, and positive reinforcement are particularly important in these program types.

PROVIDE ADEQUATE SUPPORT AND COMMUNICATION STRUCTURES.

Mentors who felt they had easy access to program staff felt more confident and supported in their mentoring efforts. In contrast, mentors in programs where staff are not readily available expressed a strong need for a clear process for communicating with teachers or other site-based staff. A feedback loop of some sort in which teachers, mentors and program staff can discuss student needs and progress, as well mentor needs and progress, is important to the sense of support mentors feel and the monitoring of progress.

PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOCIAL ACTIVITIES.

Mentors and mentees expressed a desire for increased program-supported social activities and events. These included recommendations for mentor-only social activities, mentee-only social activities and events to which both mentors and mentees would be invited.

ENSURE A GOOD MATCH BETWEEN MENTOR EXPECTATIONS OF DEPTH OR TYPE OF RELATIONSHIP WITH MENTEE, AND PROGRAM GOALS.

Many of the mentors in the focused activity program types wanted a more personal relationship with their mentees than what was expected of them by the program. Initial interviews with mentors should include an explanation and description of the type of mentoring relationship which is promoted by that program. If the fit is not ideal, using the typology, potential mentors could be referred to a program which better matches their interests.

COMMUNICATE APPROPRIATELY WITH THE MENTEE'S FAMILY.

Mentoring programs must be clear about their expectations of family involvement with the mentor and with program staff. Many parents or guardians wanted additional information about the program and the mentor. While program policies may view communication or involvement with a mentee's family by a mentor as inappropriate, especially where the nature of the activity is specified by the program, this should be made clear to mentors, mentees and the mentee's family. It would seem that all parents or guardians should be made aware of their child's involvement in the program and should be provided with adequate information about program goals, policies and processes.

Reflections on Mentoring

While it was not the purpose of this study to analyze the motivations of mentors, it would be a lost opportunity if these data were not reported. Mentors found this question quite intriguing. It was obvious that through the process of being interviewed about and reflecting on their experiences in mentoring, the reasons why they chose to become mentors became more clear. Motivations ranged from wanting to share what one had as one was growing up, to wanting to help ensure that a young person's childhood was better than theirs:

> *I had a fairly easy, stable life growing up. I want to be able to help provide some of that stability for a young person who does not have that opportunity. (mentor, traditional program)*

> *My mother was unavailable to me. I know what it's like to grow up with a "missing" parent. (mentor, traditional program)*

> *I suppose if someone really got into it, you'd find that perhaps I felt as though I had failed in some ways as a parent but still had something to give a child, to help a young person. (mentor, long-term focused activity program)*

> *We wanted our kids to be exposed to different situations, different lifestyles, so they could grow up seeing that mainly, people are people and we all need to work together. (mentor, team mentoring program)*

You know the saying about comparing apples and oranges. It is an analogy which relates well to the utility and findings of this study. Mentoring programs are like fruit in a fruit basket—all different shapes and sizes, different tastes and different uses. From the outside, they all seem the same since they're all fruit. But much like mentoring programs, they are of the same family but differ significantly on a variety of dimensions—dimensions, for mentoring programs, which define the mentoring typology. All of the fruit in the fruit basket are good; they serve a particular need and have a particular utility and function. So,

too, are mentoring programs. All of the programs which participated in this study had a special role or niche. Some focused on academic tutoring, some provided male or family role models, and still others provided extra support and guidance about post-secondary options. Who is to say whether one goal is more important than another? All of these programs addressed a special need—and appeared to address them efficiently, cost-effectively, and meaningfully for young people and adults alike.

I cannot end this story about mentoring relationships without conveying something about the depth of these interviews with mentors, with teachers and parents, and with mentees. The comment from a team mentor's child who, in explaining her perspective on why the mentee was involved with her family, said, *"Why, because we love him!"* Or the short-term focused program mentor who wept as she described the joy and reward she felt when she received powerful thank-you notes from some of the students she tutored. Or the mentee who described how good it felt to be the oldest child, relative to the mentor's children (he was the youngest in his family) and to be able to help the younger children, *"like, I buckle up the baby in the car seat."* Or the single-parent mother of a mentee who, in describing the impact of the mentor on her child, talked about the importance of her son seeing a husband and wife interacting respectfully and caringly, since her husband had died when her son was too young to remember.

Concluding Statement

What is perhaps the most important finding of this study is that, regardless of the type of mentoring program, mentoring is a win-win situation. Just within the five programs which participated in this study, over one thousand volunteers were currently working with over 1800 young people in significant, beneficial and most certainly cost-effective relationships. Young people win; adult volunteers win. It is, quite frankly, society at large that is eventually the real winner.